

### Brief Bio:

Mary Buchinger's poems have appeared in *Cortland Review*, *Euphony*, *New Madrid*, *RUNES: A Literary Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and other journals; she has been invited to read in the Netherlands, France, and the Library of Congress and has received the New England Poetry Club's Daniel Varoujan Award, judged by Marge Piercy. Her collection, *Roomful of Sparrows*, (Finishing Line Press, 2008) was a semi-finalist in the New Women's Voices Series. She holds a Ph.D. in applied linguistics and is associate professor of English and communication studies at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Boston.

### Selection of poems:

#### **"Redeem/The unread vision in the higher dream"**

T.S. Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*

The pigeon lands on the sidewalk beside the raw graffiti'd wall, wings spread—each feather burning with sun—and I could swear I've seen that bird before. Then it comes to me: it's the Holy Ghost incarnate, the gold-tipped dove on church bulletins, coming low over the water, hovering over the head of Jesus in illustrated Bibles. The halo-making descent wipes clean the grey bird like he's learned something from Garbo and Leni Riefenstahl about the power of the right angle and light to suggest godlike lurking. But the bird shifts and the Ghost is gone. Pink eyes and purple feet, blotchy bent feathers; and it's true, I know that bird too. What I mean to say is this: We all want, of course, that finest shot of ourselves, but what we need is someone with the eyes to look for it, to show us what it is. Someone who can position the grey pigeon in us just right, golden up the edges—reminiscent of the holy—be blinded by our particular disturbance of the light.

Published in *The Massachusetts Review*

## Telling the Poet

So far, her reading has been okay, maybe not quite up to my expectations, but then she launches into the poem about her daughter's snail, closely observed —my sons have one too, so I'm extra ready to enjoy this poem because I love our snail, Slimer, with, just as she notes, that tender wetness, transparent and speckled expanding balloon, astonishing tentacles that swivel independently, leaving one to feel utterly thick-skinned and inept. The economy of that house on its back, its effortless neatness, opening to question what does one need.

But then, she goes on to say how one morning in December, she found it dead; how, weeping, she wrapped it up and buried it in the cold ground of her garden, and I had to hold myself in my chair, or rather, since it was standing room only, to stay my tongue and keep watch, because I fully doubted her snail was dead. Our own snail still fools us, even after several resurrections. One year it disappeared for months only to show up suddenly, clinging to the stereo. Just last week, I peeked into his jar thinking his spring must be close. Steeling myself, I said to the kids:

I'm afraid this time is really it—look, Slimer is upside-down beneath a stick, all dried up, clumps of dirt in its shell. But even so, just in case, because, if anything, it has taught us to not to give up, we set out the lettuce, spritz it gently with water, wait. And yet again, it emerges awake and ravenous, new all over, tentacles waving, curious; its long dry dormancy only our memory. How could I tell her she hadn't given her snail a proper chance; that it held within its spiraled shell, deep mystery —revelations beyond what even we, poets, might in this human world imagine.

Published in *RUNES: A Literary Review*

*A certain speed of wind blowing  
over a certain distance a considerable length of time  
essentially indeterminate creates lasting waves never going any where.*

*Some waves undergo a phenomenon called "breaking" when the base can no longer support if the slope is too steepness if the depth- to- height ratio is too great it collapses.*

created when the wind has blown for a while  
time's hinge at a given velocity. Seas last much longer even after  
the wind sinks  
can build and building still until swells: waves that have moved away  
from their area of origin  
oblivious

to local conditions undwelling — in other words  
in technical terms  
in the language available swells are seas rummaging lasting  
lasting long knitted beyond

3

## Raw Materiel

boys  
girls  
fresh  
skin  
friable  
hair  
iron  
for fences  
and iron  
to burst  
shards  
to rip  
fences  
and skin  
more skin  
more fences  
more iron  
bursting  
iron  
fences  
skin  
shards  
fences  
shards  
skin  
hair  
fresh  
friable  
girls  
boys

Published in *Upstairs at Duroc* (France)